

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 H-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 MC-02 ACDA-05 NEAE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 /052 W

----- 046483

O P 061130Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0477

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USMTM DHAHRAN PRIORITY

USMTM USAS RIYADH PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 1605

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA

SUBJ: MODA REQUEST FOR TOW MISSILE

REF : (A) JIDDA 1489 DTG 03645Z MAR 75

(B) STATE 146158 DTG 070715Z JUL 74

(C) STATE 223014 DTG 100745Z OCT 74

SUMMARY: RECENT SAG REQUEST FOR TOW MISSILE (REF A) IS MEANT TO SUPERCEDE LETTER OF OFFER ULP RATHER THAN BEING IN ADDITIONAL TO IT. SAG FINDS DELIVERIES SCHEDULED ON ULP TOO SLOW, AND ASKS, IN VIEW OF HIGH LEVEL RAPPORT ESTABLISHED BY ELLSWORTH AND TURKI VISITS, IF USG CANNOT IMPROVE ON DELIVERY SCHEDULE DRAWN UP PRIOR TO SECURITY COMMISSION MEETINGS. TURKI REQUESTS ADVANCE WORD ON PROPOSED DELIVERY SCHEDULE PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF NEW LOA. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE PRINCE TURKI AND LT. GENERAL ALI KABBANI (G-3) ON MARCH 5 EMBASSY AND USMTM OFFICERS CLARIFIED THAT LATEST SAG REQUEST FOR TOW LETTER OF OFFER (REF A) IS MEANT TO SUPERCEDE LETTER OF OFFER ULP RATHER THAN BEING IN ADDITION TO IT.

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2. IN PRELIMINARY MEETING WITH GEN. KABBANI, KABBANI SAID THAT

MODA HAD CONSIDERED LETTER OF OFFER ULP BUT HAD NOT ACCEPTED IT BECAUSE (A) MODA REQUIREMENTS WERE DETERMINED TO BE THE LARGER, MORE RECENTLY REQUESTED QUANTITIES PZR REF A AND (B) THE PROPOSED DELIVERY SCHEDULE OF ULP WAS TOO LONG. EXCEPT FOR THE INITIAL 12 LAUNCHERS AND 200 MISSILES TO BE PROVIDED DURING THE FOURTH THROUGH SEVENTH MONTHS FOLLOWING FUNDING OF FMS CASE, THE BULK OF THE ORDER WOULD NOT BEGIN TO BE AVAILABLE UNTIL THE THIRTY-FIFTH MONTH, NOTED KABBANI; 3 1/2 YEARS WOULD ELAPSE BEFORE THE ORDER WAS FILLED. IN MODA'S VIEW, SAID KABBANI, THIS WAS SIMPLY TOO LONG A DELIVERY PERIOD. KABBANI POINTED OUT THAT ULP HAD BEEN PREPARED BEFORE ELLSWORTH SECURITY COMMISSION MEETINGS IN RIYADH AND TURKI'S VISIT TO THE US. IN VIEW OF HIGH LEVEL RAPPORT ESTABLISHED DURING THESE VISITS, SURELY USG COULD NOW IMPROVE ON PROPOSED DELIVERY TIMES. REFERRING AGAIN TO THE INITIAL 12 LAUNCHERS AND 200 MISSILES, KABBANI STATED THAT MODA WAS NOT SIMPLY INTERESTED IN SAYING IT HAD RECEIVED THE TOW; IT WANTED SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES TO HAVE TWO OPERATIONAL DEFENSIVE BATTALIONS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.

3. IN SUBSEQUENT MEETING, DEP. MIN. DEF. TURKI PRESSED HARD FOR DELIVERY SCHEDULE CONSIDERABLY SHORTER THAN THAT PROPOSED IN CASE ULP, STATING THAT BOTH MINDEF SULTAN AND KING FAISAL WERE AWARE OF ULP AND HOPED THE USG COULD IMPROVE ON DELIVERY TIMES. IN REPLY, POINT WAS MADE THAT DELIVERY TIMES OUTLINED IN ULP WERE NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF PRIORITY GIVEN TO SAG REQUEST (WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY), BUT WERE LIMITED BY PRODUCTION CAPACITY IN U.S. AMERICANS SUGGESTED THAT QUICKEST WAY TO GET TOW IN KINGDOM WOULD BE TO SIGN ULP (NOTING THAT PRICE ESTIMATES HAD NOW EXPIRED), AFTER WHICH EMBASSY WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO OBTAIN IMPROVED DELIVERY SCHEDULE. THIS WAS POLITELY REJECTED AS BEING A PIG IN A POKE; TURKI CONCLUDED THAT MODA WOULD PREFER TO HAVE A NEW LETTER OF OFFER IN RESPONSE TO HIS LATEST REQUEST, WITH BEST POSSIBLE DELIVERY SCHEDULE OUTLINED FOR MODA'S CONSIDERATION. HOW SOON, HE ASKED, COULD A NEW LETTER OF OFFER BE PRESENTED?

4. EMBASSY AND USMTM REPS CITED PAST EXPERIENCE OF 6-8 WEEKS FROM REQUEST TO ARRIVAL OF LETTER OF OFFER; PERHAPS THE SHORTER PERIOD COULD PREVAIL IN THIS CASE. EMBASSY OFFICER POINTED OUT THAT SIZE OF LOA WOULD REQUIRE ITS SUBMISSION CONFIDENTIAL

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TO THE CONGRESS FOR AN ADDITIONAL THREE WEEKS BEFORE IT COULD BE PRESENTED TO MODA: THUS, NO LESS THAN NINE WEEKS WOULD PASS. EMBASSY WOULD, HOWEVER, ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN PRELIMINARY REPLY OUTLINING BEST POSSIBLE DELIVERY SCHEDULE. TURKI HOPED HE COULD HAVE THIS INFORMATION IN A WEEK OR SO.

5. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS, POINT WAS MADE BY SAUDIS THAT THEY CONSIDERED QUANTITIES REQUESTED TO BE ONLY HALF THEIR

EVENTUAL NEEDS, SINCE THEY WOULD ULTIMATELY WISH TO SUPPLY
FOUR ANTI-TANK BATTALIONS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) LETTER OF OFFER AS REQUESTED BY REF
(A), TO BE PRESENTED AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT; (B) ADVANCE
WORD, FOR PRESENTATION TO PRINCE TURKI, OF BEST POSSIBLE
DELIVERY SCHEDULE WE CAN OFFER MODA; (C) USMTM DHAHRAN REPEAT
REF (A) TO USAS RIYADH.
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